WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.   A system, comprising:

a speech recognition processor that receives unconstrained input speech and outputs a string of words that can include a numeric language; and

a numeric understanding processor that converts the string of words into a sequence of digits.

2.   The system of claim 1, further comprising:

an acoustic model database utilized by the speech recognition processor.

3.   The system of claim 2, wherein the acoustic model comprises:

a first set of hidden Markov models that characterize the numeric language; and

a second set of hidden Markov models that characterize the remaining language in the vocabulary.

4.   The system of claim 3, further comprising:

a set of filler models that characterizes out-of-vocabulary features.

5.   The system of claim 1, further comprising:

an utterance verification processor that verifies the accuracy of the numeric language in the string of words.

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1   6.  The system of claim 1, further comprising:

2       a validity database that stores a grammar; and

3       a string validation processor that outputs validity information based on a

4   comparison of the sequence of digits with the grammar.


1   7.  The system of claim 6, further comprising:

2       a dialogue manager processor that initiates an action based on the validity

3   information.


1   8.  The system of claim 1, further comprising:

2       a language model database that emphasizes the numeric language utilized by

3   the speech recognition processor.


1   9.  The system of claim 1, wherein:

2       the numeric understanding processor converts the string of words into the

3   sequence of digits based on a set of rules.


1   10.  A method, comprising the steps of:

2       receiving unconstrained input speech and outputting a string of words that can

3   include a numeric language; and

4       converting the string of words into a sequence of digits.

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